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State of Vermont
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THE VERMONT WAY FORWARD: ROBERT T. STAFFORD SCHOOLS FOR MATH, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

We have now our own opportunities to help generations of young Vermonters obtain the skills they need to succeed in this century by ensuring that they are learning math and science, as well as core technology and engineering skills as well as, or better, than their counterparts throughout the world.

That is why I am proposing the creation of Robert T. Stafford Schools for Math, Science and Technology. These regional Stafford Schools for high school students will go beyond the scope of today's technical education and emphasize the skills needed for the next wave of scientific advancements.

Governor Jim Douglas, Inaugural Address, January 4, 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Governor Douglas is proposing that Robert T. Stafford Schools of Math, Science and Technology be established for high school students throughout our state.

The Stafford Schools will be public schools that operate within the existing system but will have a higher concentration of coursework related to math, science and technology.

These schools will be critical to the support and success of sectors such as environmental engineering. Vermont will concentrate existing resources and invest in new infrastructure to establish the state as a global center for the study and application of environmental engineering, and related disciplines, necessary to solve environmental problems worldwide.

Making sure that Vermont has a trained, high-skilled workforce is necessary to attracting firms and professionals to the state while retaining those already here. The State of Vermont must make a commitment to leading the nation, and indeed, the world in math and science education at the K-12 level.

Creation of these schools will also ensure that Vermont's universities and colleges have a ready pool of applicants for their engineering programs, and will position the state's children to compete for the next generation of high-tech jobs in tomorrow's economy.

The Governor has asked the Next Generation Commission to extend its charter to study the creation of Stafford Schools and other means to bring math and science competency to new levels.

WHY CREATE STAFFORD SCHOOLS?

The establishment Stafford Schools will serve to strengthen the existing population of engineers in Vermont as well as attract other professionals in this field.

Part of the human condition is to embrace those things that are familiar. This is true of engineers as well; they have great passion for the study of engineering and foundational disciplines such as math and science and will want to ensure that their children have access to studies at the K-12 level that are world class.

In short, if Vermont wants to attract the best engineers to work and grow our existing businesses in this state, we must assure them that their children will have access to the finest math and science education in the world.

The Stafford Schools will expand upon the successes of our existing public school infrastructure and can serve as models for innovation and experimentation in both instruction and curriculum.

Students will receive a well-rounded education and will emerge from the Stafford Schools better prepared for post secondary academic concentrations in a variety of scientific and technical fields including engineering.

These schools will also serve to train entrepreneurs in such fields as computer science and software development, as well as the skilled technicians who will be needed to staff the businesses these entrepreneurs start and grow.

Stafford Schools need not be located in new facilities but can co-locate within existing schools much like technical centers currently exist in a number of high schools in the state.

The Vermont Institute for Science, Math and Technology will be asked to work with the Department of Education to review the math and science educational standards and curriculum in Vermont and make a recommendation on academic programs to be established in the Stafford schools.

A statewide system of Robert T. Stafford Schools of Math, Science and Technology can help position Vermont and its people for the next generation of high-tech, high-wage jobs not only in Environmental Engineering, but in other fields as well.

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